

CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for providing multimedia presentations on demand in a near on demand environment, comprising:

a) providing beginning segments for pre-recording by subscribers where each beginning segment corresponds to ones of a plurality of multimedia presentations, each beginning segment having a duration at least as long as a predetermined time interval; and,

b) transmitting each one of said plurality of multimedia presentations concurrently on a plurality of channels with identical presentations transmitted on a different channel of said plurality of channels, and with a start time of each transmission having a periodic interval not exceeding said predetermined time interval,

c) responding to a subscriber request for performance of a selected one of said plurality of multimedia presentations by providing said subscriber an authorization to commence playback of one of said beginning segments corresponding to said selected one of said plurality of multimedia presentations,

said authorization comprises at least one of an authorization to commence recording said selected one of said plurality of multimedia presentations for which broadcast has already begun, and to commence playback of said corresponding one of said beginning segments, and

preventing playback of said recording of said selected one of said plurality of multimedia presentations upon completion of said presentation.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of providing said subscribers with a menu of said plurality of multimedia presentations.

Claims 3-4 (Cancelled)

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31, wherein said authorization comprises a descrambling code key for descrambling said selected one of said plurality of multimedia presentations and said corresponding one of said beginning segments.

6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31, wherein said authorization comprises an access code for accessing a channel over which said selected one of said plurality of multimedia presentations is transmitted.

Claim 7 (Cancelled)

8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31 further comprising; generating a billing code responsive to said subscriber request for said selected one of plurality of multimedia presentations.

9. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31, further comprising; recording each said beginning segment provided to said subscriber automatically, responsive to said subscriber's initial activation of a multimedia system.

10. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31, further comprising; periodically replacing ones of said beginning segments with new beginning segments corresponding to further multimedia presentations.

11. (Currently amended) A system for providing multimedia presentations on demand in a near on demand environment, comprising;

a transmitter including;

means for providing a plurality of beginning segments, each one corresponding to ones of a plurality of multimedia presentations, and each said beginning segment having a duration at least as long as a predetermined interval; and,

means for transmitting said plurality of said multimedia presentations on a plurality of channels, with a periodic interval between start times of identical programming broadcast on different channels not exceeding said predetermined interval

an authorization control system responsive to a subscriber request for performance of a selected one of said multimedia presentations, said authorization control system providing said subscriber an authorization to commence playback of said multimedia presentation wherein,

said authorization comprises at least one of an authorization to commence recording said selected one of said multimedia presentations for which broadcast has already begun, and to commence playback of a corresponding one of said beginning segments; and

a performance control system for preventing subscriber playback of said recording of said selected one of said multimedia presentations upon presentation completion.

12. (Previously presented) The system of claim 11, wherein said transmitter transmits to a subscriber a menu of said plurality of multimedia presentations to permit subscriber selection of one of said multimedia presentations.

Claims 13-14 (Cancelled)

15. (Currently amended) The system of claim ~~13~~11, wherein said authorization comprises a descrambling code key for descrambling a beginning segment corresponding to said selected one of said multimedia presentations for which a broadcast is in progress.

16. (Currently amended) The system of claim ~~13~~11, wherein said authorization comprises an access code for accessing a channel over which said selected one of said multimedia presentations is broadcast.

Claim 17 (Cancelled)

18. (Original) The system of claim 11, further comprising a billing control system generating a billing code responsive to a subscriber request for said selected one of multimedia presentations.